

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 SP-02 SS-15 NSC-05 /057 W
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R 081425Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6281
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USCINCSO
DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT SHUM ES
SUBJ: NATIONAL GUARD EVICTS CAMPESINO GROUP OCCUPYING COTTON FARM
AND TAKES 20 PRISONERS

1. PRESS GAVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE DEC. 5, INCLUDING PHOTOGRAPHS, TO ACTION TAKEN BY NATIONAL GUARD TO EVICT SOME 250 CAMPESINOS OCCUPYING COTTON FARM IN DEPARTMENT OF SAN VICENTE. INITIAL MEDIA COVERAGE CONFINED TO BULLETIN AND PHOTOGRAPHS ISSUED BY NATIONAL GUARD.
2. BULLETIN STATED THAT CAMPESINOS HAD BEEN OCCUPYING COTTON FARM OWNED BY AYALA FAMILY SINCE NOV 23 AND PREVENTING HARVEST OF COTTON CROP. BULLETIN STATED DISPUTE WAS CONCERNING MATTER OF WAGES AND THIS ASPECT WOULD BE INVESTIGATED SUBSEQUENTLY.
3. NATIONAL GUARD INFORMATION STATED THAT 15 MEN AND 5 WOMEN WERE TAKEN PRISONER BY THE NATIONAL GUARD. THEY ADDED THAT PERSONS DETAINED HAD IN THEIR POSSESSION

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VARIOUS TYPES OF WEAPONS AND PROPAGANDA MATERIAL OF BOTH THE POPULAR REVOLUTIONARY BLOC (BPR) AND THE FUERZAS POPULARES DE LIBERACION (FPL). GN BULLETIN IN UNUSUAL ACTION LISTED NAMES OF ALL 20 PERSONS TAKEN PRISONER AND CONCLUDED WITH STATEMENT THAT PERSONS DETAINED WOULD BE TURNED OVER TO JUDICIAL TRIBUNALS IN SAN VICENTE ON DEC 5. GUARD ACTION IN BREAKING

UP TAKEOVER OF FARM AND ARRESTS TOOK PLACE EARLY MORNING
DEC 2.

4. PRESS COVERAGE ON DEC 6 QUOTED SECOND GOES BULLETIN
STATING THAT THE OCCUPATION OF THE FARM ON NOV 23 WAS
A CRIMINAL ACT AGAINST PUBLIC PEACE UNDER ARTICLE 400 OF
THE PENAL CODE BUT THAT WITH THE ENTERING INTO EFFECT OF
THE NEW LAW OF PUBLIC ORDER, THIS ACTION COULD BE
PROSECUTED UNDER CHAPTER 4 OF THAT LAW AGAIN AS AN ACT AGAINST
PUBLIC PEACE. BULLETIN WENT ON TO STATE THAT THESE
PENALTIES COULD BE APPLIED WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO OTHER
CRIMINAL ACTS THAT RESULTED AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE
OCCUPATION.

5. OTHER ARTICLES POINTED OUT THAT PHOTOGRAPHS RELEASED
BY GN DID NOT SHOW 20 PERSONS AND THERE HAS BEEN NO
OFFICIAL INDICATION WHERE PRISONERS WERE HELD OVER
WEEKEND. COL. ALVERENGA, HEAD OF GN, TOLD DATT ON
DEC 7 THAT ALL 20 HAVE BEEN TURNED OVER TO NATIONAL
POLICE AND ARE NOW IN JAIL IN SAN SALVADOR. VICE PRESIDENT
SAME DAY TOLD EMBOFF HE WAS SURE CASES HAD NOW BEEN
TURNED OVER TO JUDGE.

6. ARCHBISHOP ROMERO MENTIONED ACTION OF THE NATIONAL
GUARD AGAINST THESE CAMPESINOS IN HIS SERMON DEC 4
CONDEMNING GOVERNMENT AND STATING THAT CAMPESINOS ONLY
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ATTEMPTING TO RECEIVE THEIR JUST WAGES.

7. MEANWHILE GOVERNMENT PUTTING OUT WORD THAT NEW LAW
WOULD BE VIGOROUSLY ENFORCED AGAINST ALL SUCH ILLEGAL ACTS
AS LAND-GRABBING, AND OFFICIALS WHO FAIL TO CARRY OUT
PROVISION OF LAW WOULD ALSO BE PUNISHED WITH IMPRISONMENT
IN ACCORDANCE SAME LAW.

8. COMMENT. DESPITE WIDE PUBLICITY GIVEN ARRESTS AND
ACTIONS OF GN, WITH OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT STRESSING LEGAL
ACTION ON PART OF GOES, THERE IS AS YET NO PROOF THAT 20
PRISONERS HAVE BEEN ACCORDED FULL DUE PROCESS OF LAW. ALSO
QUESTIONABLE WHETHER NEW LAW, WHICH DID NOT OFFICIALLY GO
INTO EFFECT UNTIL DEC 3, CAN LEGITIMATELY BE USED TO PRO-
SECUTE ALLEGED AFFENDERS. OFFICIAL SOURCES CONTENTEND THAT
ACTIONS TAKEN ARE COMPLETELY LEGAL AND CARRIED OUT WITH
CONSIDERABLE RESTRAINT (NO REPORTED INJURIES TO EITHER
CAMPESINOS OR NATIONAL GUARD). GOES OPPONENTS HOWEVER
MAINTAIN THAT GOES VERSION OF INCIDENT UNTRUE AND
CAMPESINO ACTIONS JUSTIFIED. AS GENERALLY THE CASE
IN EL SALVADOR, PROBABLY ELEMENTS OF TRUTH IN BOTH
VERSIONS. ULTIMATE DISPOSITION OF 20 PRISONERS

HOPEFULLY WILL BE CLARIFIED SHORTLY AND BETTER
ASSESSMENT OF LEGALITY OF GN ACTION CAN BE MADE AT THAT
TIME.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
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